



# ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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## Kentucky students gain ground in every subject on EXPLORE and PLAN tests

Kentucky students scored higher on EXPLORE and PLAN tests in 2012, registering gains in every subject tested, according to data released recently by the Kentucky Department of Education. The data also show more students are on track to be ready for college coursework by the time they graduate high school.

The EXPLORE test is given to all 8th-grade public school students and the PLAN test is given to all 10th-grade public school students in Kentucky each September. The assessments, precursors to the ACT college entrance exam given to all public high school juniors in the state each March, test knowledge in English, mathematics, reading and science.

"We're extremely pleased with the results but are not surprised by them," Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "Since the implementation of Senate Bill 1 (2009), we've been focused on getting students ready for college and career. These test results are a clear indicator of the progress that teachers and students are making toward that goal."

EXPLORE provides an early indicator of readiness for college, provides important information for building a high school academic plan and helps students identify careers in which they might be interested. PLAN serves as the midpoint check of academic progress in high school. It is designed to improve students' preparation for education, training and work after high school while students still have time to adjust their high school courses.

"Both tests are important tools for educators, students and parents to use when planning for the future," Holliday said. Individual student scores already have been sent home to parents. "These results should be a topic of discussion about whether students are adequately preparing themselves for life after high school," he said.

In addition to higher scores, the data also show the percentage of students on track to be ready for credit-bearing college coursework increased up to 6 percent from 2011, depending on grade and subject, and up to 13 percent since the tests were first given statewide in 2006.

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## Creative writing contest for high school juniors and seniors

The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is sponsoring a creative writing contest, *Future World: How would you like to pay for that?*

The contest asks high school juniors and seniors to explain in an essay, play, short story or poem what the future looks like to them. Is there cash or are smartphones the primary forms of payment for goods and services? What are the costs and benefits they envision in the future world? As they craft their compositions, students must think about what economic concepts impact future world and whether or not there are any unintended consequences.

Submissions must be postmarked on or before Feb. 28, 2013. The winning students will be awarded cash gift cards as prizes, and the teachers who sponsor winning students also will receive prizes. [Click here](#) for more information.

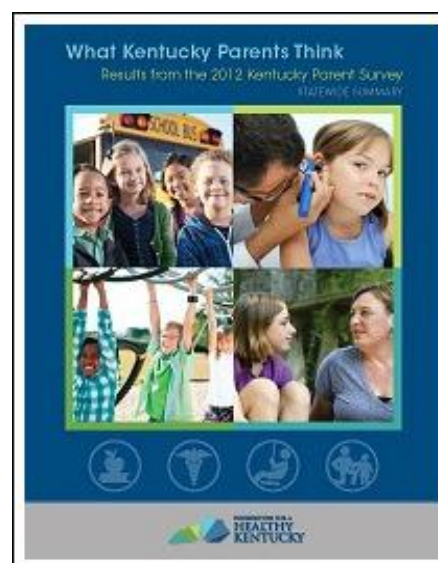
**Kentucky Summer Reading 2012 Pledge Data:**

<b>Number of Books that were pledged to read</b>	<b>11,558</b>
<b>Total Number of Individuals that pledged to read</b>	<b>1019</b>
Number of Students that pledged to read	872
Number of Educators that pledged to read	114
Number of Parents that pledged to read	16
Number of Lifelong Learners that pledged to read	17
<b>Number of Individuals Entered to win a B&amp;N gift card</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Number of Individuals that won a B&amp;N gift card</b>	<b>9</b>

## Kentucky's 2012 CCSSO Chief's Summer Reading Challenge results

Kentucky was one of 14 states that responded to the 2012 Council of Chief State School Officers Chief's Summer Reading Challenge and had the highest number of books pledged to read in 2012. The chart above shows data for the event specific to Kentucky.

For the full report, click [here](#).



## Dropout age: 'What Kentucky Parents Think'

Kentucky parents overwhelmingly favor increasing the state's high school dropout age, according to the Kentucky Parent Survey.

The Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky released the polling data along with a comprehensive summary report for the complete survey.

On the dropout issue, more than eight in 10 Kentucky parents (85 percent) said they favor increasing the dropout age in Kentucky from 16 to 18 years old. This includes the 77percent who indicated they strongly favor moving the dropout age to 18. Fewer than one in six parents (15 percent) said they opposed increasing the dropout age.

The governor has publically stated his support for increasing the dropout age to 18, prohibiting students from leaving school until they turn 18 or complete high school.

To learn more about this issue and others that Kentucky parents were polled about, download the full report: [What Kentucky Parents Think: Results from the 2012 Kentucky Parent Survey.](#)

For more information about the Kentucky Parent Survey, visit the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky [website](#).

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"While we have made progress on getting students ready for college, we clearly have more work to do in this area," Holliday said. "We also need to work on closing the gaps in performance between student groups to ensure all Kentucky students graduate college/career-ready."

In the September 2012 administration, 49,486 8th-grade Kentucky students in 322 public schools took the EXPLORE assessment and on a scale of 1 to 25, scored within a tenth of a point - plus or minus - of the national norm.

In the September 2012 administration of the PLAN assessment, 48,576 10th-grade Kentucky students in 231 public schools took the test. On a scoring scale from 1 to 32, they exceeded the national norm in every subject but mathematics.

## Ky. PTA district honored

The National PTA will recognize the [15th District PTA](#) in Kentucky with the PTA Outstanding Local Advocacy Award for its efforts to educate parents on the Common Core State Standards.

More than 11,000 parents received training and resources from the 15th District PTA about how the standards will impact their children.

The 15th District PTA for Kentucky and other honorees will be recognized during the National PTA Legislative Conference March 12-14 in Washington. National PTA's public policy agenda features four key areas: education; child health and nutrition; juvenile justice and delinquency prevention; and school safety. The 2013 National PTA Federal Public Policy Agenda can be viewed at [PTA.org](http://PTA.org).



## Mark your electronic calendar for Kentucky's Digital Learning Day, Feb. 6

From offering online classes to creating digital textbooks to flipping classrooms, Kentucky teachers are embracing technology because of student benefits. Now there is a special day to recognize the power of digital learning in the classroom.

On Feb. 6, thousands of students, parents, educators and community members across the country will celebrate the second annual Digital Learning Day. Here in Kentucky, many teachers will be participating, and it's not too late to join.

At [www.digitallearningday.org](http://www.digitallearningday.org) you can find more ideas for getting involved as well as examples of class blogs, videos, experiments and projects from schools across the nation. There also is a certificate of participation that you can print for students or display in their classroom.

If your child's school or district website showcases teaching and learning that involve the effective use of technology, send the website link to [Grace Yeh](#) along with a few sentences about the content being featured.

On Feb. 6, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will publish the link on its Digital Learning Day website with a brief description of the school's participation. Visit the site (which can be accessed from the KDE home page [here](#)) to learn more about the exciting digital learning activities occurring throughout Kentucky.





## Family history workshop set for Feb. 9 at KHS

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) and Kentucky Genealogical Society (KGS) will host a free family history workshop at 10:30 a.m. Feb. 9 at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History in Frankfort. Topics include: Finding African Cemetery No. 2 and The Colored Fair.

The afternoon session covers The Colored Fair. Founded in 1869, organizers had this fair chartered by the state legislature in 1870. It became one of the most successful and well-attended annual events in both African-American and white circles.

To make a reservation for this event, contact the KHS reference desk at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4460, or [KHSrefdesk@ky.gov](mailto:KHSrefdesk@ky.gov). The registration deadline is Feb. 8.

### Kentucky Department of Education

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## Appointments made to state gifted and talented advisory council

Gov. Steve Beshear recently made several appointments to the Kentucky Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education. New members, whose terms will expire Dec. 15, 2015, include:

- Angela G. Wilson, of Somerset, principal at Pulaski County Elementary School. She will represent principals on the council. The appointment replaces Mary A. Evans, whose term has expired.
- Teresa A. Walther, of Pleasureville, who is a talented and gifted resource teacher in the Shelby County school district. She will represent gifted and talented teachers on the council. The appointment replaces Jennifer L. Chaplin, whose term has expired.
- Molly A. Isaacs-McLeod, of Goshen, who is a self-employed attorney. She will represent parents on the council. The appointment replaces Susanne M. Burkhardt, whose term has expired.
- Louis Robert Kelley Jr., of Louisville, who is an elementary school teacher for the Jefferson County school district. He will represent elementary school teachers on the council. The appointment replaces Dina Chaffin, whose term has expired.
- Josie Leann Pickerill, of Hopkinsville, who is an instructional supervisor for the Christian County school district. She will represent gifted and talented coordinators on the council. The appointment replaces Candace James, whose term has expired.
- Andrea C. Peach, of Lexington, who is a professor and associate dean at Georgetown College. She will represent postsecondary education institutions. The appointment replaces Mason J. Dyer, whose term has expired.
- Dana K. Coffey, of Waddy, who is a merchandiser at Macy's. She will serve as a parent representative on the council. The appointment replaces Julia H. Moore, whose term has expired.
- Jane Dewey, of Danville, who is district director of arts education for the Danville Independent school district. She will serve as a visual and performance arts representative. The appointment replaces Anne A. Stephens, whose term has expired.